

MOST PUZZLING POISON INTRIGUE



A HANDFUL OF POISONED CANDIED CHERRIES.

Solved by a Woman's Confession.

DRUG STORE

BECAUSE she coveted another woman's husband Miss Florence M. Campbell, of San Francisco, mailed to herself a box of poisoned cherries. Her own name and address she cut from an old letter written by this other woman and posted it on the package.

What she hoped to accomplish was the destruction of the reputation of Mrs. John C. Rathom, the other woman, by causing her to be accused of attempted murder. A divorce for Rathom was one of the incidentals of her hopes, and the culmination of her dream was a wedding that covered her errors with the veil of a married name and drowned the accusations of the one-time wife with the chime of marriage bells.

That is what she dreamed. But this is what really came to pass:

Miss Florence M. Campbell was led by her desire to avoid suspicion to sample the cherries from a layer which she had left clear of the poison. Then she had misgivings that perhaps the layers had become mixed, and that she had really poisoned herself and her friends. She flew to a chemist shop and begged an antidote for arsenic. The clerk gave her mustard and soap, and she swallowed the nauseous mixture until she was sick indeed.

On the heels of physical anguish came mental distress. The police found her out, and at last she confessed miserably the whole conspiracy, and now, instead of hiding the evil of her life forever and crossing out the past with marriage lines, she has had to blazon forth her history, and the whole country knows her for what she is and what she did.

The Chief of Police of San Francisco says there is no punishment for a woman who sends poison to herself, and Miss Campbell will have an opportunity to depart in peace from a community where she has caused a vast amount of trouble.

branded and convicted as the poisoner! Or Mrs. Rathom might be hanged, and she didn't want that.

Mrs. Scheib laughed and talked and was witty, but Miss Campbell perspired and began to feel an illness coming on. She mentioned it, for mental relief. And the girl's alarm took sudden growth. She was surely getting sick.

Was it the first of the symptoms? Nearly two hours of the anxiety had passed away.

The girl could stand it no longer. She got up and ran for the nearest drug store.

"When Mrs. Scheib got sick," proceeds Miss Campbell's own statement, "I took some of the powder to the drug store on

Larkin and Ellis streets, and the boy told me there that it was not arsenic.

"I insisted upon having an antidote any way."

"He gave me some mustard and an antidote. I asked him whether I should take the antidote right away, but he said no, he would not take it right away."

"I did not know whether it was the poison or the medicine, but I was very sick."

"I went home and tried to get Mrs. Scheib to take some of the antidote, but she would not."

"I poured some into a spoon and took it myself, for fear I had eaten a small particle of the arsenic."

She became worse than ever. Terror-stricken, she telephoned for Rathom, who promptly responded. Rathom summoned



MRS. JOHN RATHOM

FROM PHOTOGRAPH BY H. A. SCHUBERT

Mr. Scheib, whose wife had unconsciously

gone to bed.

"Mrs. Scheib is poisoned," declared Miss Campbell, "and she won't take the antidote. Make her take it!"

Mr. Scheib rushed to his wife's room and found the woman peacefully asleep. He aroused her rudely, fearing that the seeming sleep was but a stupor; and in alarm she sat upright.

"Are you poisoned?" inquired Scheib, who had the bottle of antidote and a spoon.

"Poisoned? Why, no! Who said I was?"

Miss Campbell then felt sure that only

she herself had been poisoned. She took some more mustard and another antidote, and the poetry of life faded further away than ever. Rathom had vainly tried to find a doctor, so he took charge of the case himself; and "he made me take one cup after another of mustard," says Miss Campbell.

With antidotes and emetics the young woman grew so sick that she could not swallow any more of the medicine, and then she began to recover. In the morning she was well.

She had not eaten any of the arsenic, of course, but her imagination, the mustard and the antidote answered the purpose just as well.

"I got the basket, I think, from M. Shubert, No. 917 Market street," said Miss Campbell. "I purchased the cherries at the Emporium. I bought 10 cents' worth of arsenic, half an ounce, from Blake's drug store, on Third street, and I gave the name of Mrs. R. B. White, and the address as No. 460 Harrison street. I said that I wanted it for verminal, and asked the clerk whether turpentine would mix up with it, and he said it would. I got the arsenic and put it in the candied cherries for the purpose of having the same analyzed. Mr. Rathom took the basket and cherries away with him the next morning. I mailed the package on Wednesday, June 28, to my own address. The envelope was one I had received from Mrs. Rathom."

Miss Campbell is a young woman of very good family. She is the youngest daughter of the Hon. John A. Campbell, of New Cumberland, W. Va., and was educated at Hiram College, Ohio. She brought a letter of introduction from Senator Stephen B. Elkins, of West Virginia, to Senator George C. Perkins, of California. She delivered some lectures in California, in which she scarified "the new woman."

Miss Campbell is still in California, and there are rumors of a reconciliation in the Rathom family.

solemnly informed his winsome wooer that he could not accept her dattering proposal. Solomon, the wise man, would have accepted the proposition, coming as it did from rich red pouting Roman lips. But Sculptor Guillaume told the young woman that he did not think there was happiness in a marriage between May and December.

The fair signorina is artistic in her tastes, and this has been the original impelling move of her ardent affection for M. Guillaume, the famous sculptor of the French Academy in Rome. Young women, and old ones, too, have sometimes popped the question, but this is the first time on record in the history of human hearts when a girl of twenty earnestly entreated a man of eighty to marry her. Though the young woman pleads the most disinterested love, the venerable sculptor continues to be obdurate.

During the course of her wooing of him he did falter for a short time. He hesitated and asked for time to consider. That he wobbles is lost was not exemplified in this case, for when the days allotted for consideration had elapsed M. Guillaume

consideration had elapsed M. Guillaume

TITLED GIRL OF TWENTY WOOS OCTOGENARIAN SLUPTOR AND IS CALMLY REJECTED.

Strangest Poison Plot for Love of All This Year of Poisonings.

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 7.—Miss Florence M. Campbell, when she confessed to the author of the poison plot that so greatly excited this city, also gave a remarkable psychological display.

From her story we know just how it feels to dig a pit for another's feet and step into it.

Writhing with the wholly imaginary pangs of arsenic poisoning and gasping with the very real spasms consequent on the use of emetics, Miss Campbell was sick unto her soul that she had attempted the role of a Borgin With Machiavellian trimmings.

She got her idea, of course, from the Botkin case—that murder which taught a new crime to a thousand jealous crazed women. Dunning, the husband of Mrs. Botkin's victim, was a newspaper correspondent. Rathom was also a newspaper correspondent. The two men were together with the army before the operations against Santiago. It was very natural that Rathom should talk over the awful tragedy in his friend's affairs with the woman who was to him what Mrs. Botkin was to Dunning.

Dunning, Miss Campbell, well-born, well-bred, well-educated, applied the Botkin reasoning to her own case and thought she saw an opportunity to improve on the murder that sent Mrs. Botkin to prison for life. There was a mixed motive in the case, Mrs. Rathom was threatening her husband with a divorce suit because of his relations with Miss Campbell, and the latter thought out the scheme, in part at least, in order that she might have something with which to blackmail the injured wife into silence.

The denouement of the plot was artistic and exciting.

First the public became aware that an attempt had been made to poison Miss Campbell with arsenic in cherries and that her landlady, Mrs. Scheib, had also partaken of the sweets and had also been made very ill.

The next step was the testing of the box of candied cherries.

"There is enough arsenic here to kill a herd of cows," was the chemist's report.

Then the police made the discovery that the address on the box was in the hand-

writing of Mrs. John Rathom, whose possible motive was no deep secret.

So far it was all as Miss Campbell had planned.

Then John B. Rathom entered upon the scene. He declared his positive belief that neither his wife nor Miss Campbell sent the poisoned candies, but he was not prepared to say that he did not send them himself.

He made a very frank confession of his own wrong doings. He admitted that he had behaved in a disgraceful way toward both his wife and Miss Campbell and declared that he fully deserved any trouble which might come upon him.

He introduced further complications into the mystery by revealing a proposition which he said Mrs. Scheib, wife of Mr. Scheib, with whom Miss Campbell lived, had made to him. Mr. Scheib came after the attempted poisoning and said in effect: "Your wife sent this box of poisoned candy. She has nearly poisoned my wife and Miss Campbell. You must go to her and make her pay the doctors' bills, and sign a paper that she will leave the State and not seek a divorce from you. Then you can get a divorce from her on the ground of desertion and marry Miss Campbell."

Scheib stoutly denied that he ever made such a proposition, and declared that Rathom had utterly distorted what he said.

It took a month to disentangle the ugly skein. During that time Miss Campbell indignantly denied that she had mailed herself the poisoned candy, but the police plodded along, proved Mrs. Rathom's innocence and gradually brought the matter home to Miss Campbell, and that young woman at last confessed it all.

"My only object in mailing this poisoned candy was because Mrs. Rathom threatened to use my name and make it public," said Miss Campbell, when she had to tell it at last. "That I would be sued as a correspondent made me do this. I intended holding the poisoned candy matter over her head, and thought possibly I could frighten her from using my name publicly, and that was my whole object in doing it."

"I assure you I never had any thought of injuring anybody, and the poisoned

candy was safely tucked in the bottom of the basket, the top layers being perfectly free from any arsenic."

After the poison was received Mrs. Scheib recalled that earlier in the day some woman had inquired by telephone whether Miss Campbell had received a package by mail. She felt sure that it was Mrs. Rathom's voice.

Miss Campbell, however, confessed that she herself did the telephoning, as part of the plot to incriminate Mrs. Rathom.

When Miss Campbell returned at evening she found the package awaiting her. She did not intend to open it, but Mrs. Scheib recognized Mrs. Rathom's handwriting, a was curious. When Mrs. Scheib accused her of being afraid to eat the candies, the presence of two sewing girls embarrassed her and she and Mrs. Scheib did eat from the top layers.

Then Miss Campbell began to fear. Suppose that the candies had got shaken up in the mail!

Suppose that a little, just a little, of the arsenic had been shaken out of the knife-

opened candies in the bottom of the box and had found its way to that top layer while the box was upside down in the post office!

Suppose—Miss Campbell grew maddened by her suppositions. She suspected that she was beginning to feel sick.

Tet the sewing girls and Mrs. Scheib were there.

She had to conceal her fears and wait. Perhaps no poison had been taken. It was foolish to be so frightened.

Then she wondered what the first symptoms of arsenic poisoning were.

Was arsenic a quick poison or a slow poison?

She tried to think, but there had been no poison case in all her girlish experience. Yes, the Botkin case—and death, death to two women, was the story of that crime! It was an awful time for young Miss Campbell, but she did not dare to betray herself.

Mrs. Scheib might die and she might be



DONNA MARIA COLONNA

GUILLAUME THE GREAT SCULPTOR